

Dragonlore

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must therefore date some time between 1680 and 1706. The arms to the sinister are those of her father, Sir Thomas Osborne, who later became the 1st Duke of Leeds. The two beasts show an unusual transitional state between the Tudor and the Victorian ways of depicting them.

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A Griffin in a treadmill drawn by Antony Denning



The College of Dracology for the Study of Fabulous Beasts

St Wulstan (1007-1095) was Bishop of Worcester and was the only Saxon Bishop not to be replaced by a Norman, by King William after the Conquest. He was a champion of the poor and the oppressed, and did much to oppose the slave trade, and may well have been effective in other ways, since Worcestershire, unlike Herefordshire next door over the hills or Somerset further downstream, seems to have no indigenous dragon legends. Did he do a St Patrick, and drive them all away?

The intriguing picture on the cover, drawn by Antony Denning, was inspired by a picture of a dachshund working a treadmill. Since it was done for the Grocers' Company, Antony wondered whether it might be turning a peppermill. Note that the Griffin is biting his own tail, so perhaps fancying himself in the Ouroborus role.

Antony also sent in two pictures of a terracotta Wyvern from a roof gable, sadly missing a wing, but still very lively and expressive. It is similar, but not identical, to a gable-end dragon in Bridgwater, illustrated in Brian Wright's book on *Somerset Dragons*, page 134.

Fabulous Beasts among the White Lions

The White Lion Society was started in 1989 to fill the role of the Friends of the College of Arms, and its energetic Secretary, Roland Symons (a dracologist of note) has arranged a succession of visits to Cathedrals and other sites of heraldic interest, produces a regular Newsletter and also an Armorial illustrating the arms of all its armigerous members. Since there is some overlap between these and our group of dracologists, we have already seen the Unicorns in the arms of John Brooke-Little (*see No 17*), though he now also quarters the Dolphins in his mother's arms (*right*), as well as the Griffins in Cecil Humphery-Smith's (*No 26*) and in



A Few More Fabulous Beasts from Bookplates



Brian North Lee's book on *British Royal Bookplates* (Aldershot, 1992) contains a few interesting items. One is this plate for Prince Albert showing his differenced Royal arms quartered with Saxony, and a very handsome Victorian Unicorn supporter, from an engraving by Mary Byfield.

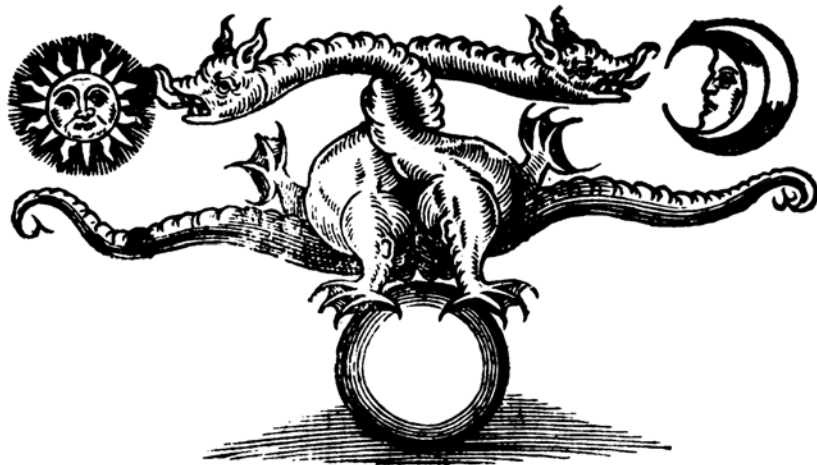
This plate from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle was engraved by Stephen Gooden in 1936 and has a spirited St George tackling a vigorous dragon (*right*).

Another curiosity is this plate for Bridgit, the Dowager Countess of Plymouth, with its Dragon and Griffin supporters (*see over page*). She was married to Charles FitzCharles, Earl of Plymouth, the natural son of King Charles II, in 1678, but was widowed a couple of years later, and eventually married again in 1706. This plate



Dragons as Symbols

Fred Gettings has a reputation for dealing objectively with esoteric matters in history, while having enough imagination to understand what the ancient alchemists and their like were actually trying to achieve. His book *Visions of the Occult* (London, 1987) gives an insight into the art and symbolism found in the realms of magic, witchcraft, divination and alchemy, and traces much of it back to the traditional imagery of the arts of initiation in ancient times, so it is not surprising that we find dragons and demons of all sorts making an appearance. With a wealth of illustrations from a wide range of sources, we have selected this alchemical symbol showing two dragons entwined between sun, moon and earth, representing perhaps the balance of conflicting forces in each human being between male and female, physical and spiritual, heavenly and earthly, as well as the notion of Mercury balancing Sulphur and Salt, one of the key concepts in alchemy. In astronomy and astrology, the two points known as Dragon's Head and Dragon's Tail in the celestial sphere move in a predictable way through the ecliptic circle, and such observations have contributed to our understanding of the movements of the planets. It may be that such imagery also played a part in the alchemical world-picture, and it seems that the dragons' heads and tails are key points in this picture. At the very least, they make an attractive pattern in this woodcut from Thomas Norton's *Ordinall of Alchemy* (1652 edition).



Royston Griffey's (*No 36*), Roland's own Dolphin (*No 42*), John Dent's Wyvern crest (*No 28*) and Pete Taylor's Sea-Unicorn (*No 27*). The Armorial has a total of 139 arms, of which no fewer than 40 contain Fabulous Beasts in 20 different varieties. Griffins remain the favourites, with seven showings, followed jointly by Dragons, Unicorns and Dolphins with four each, and then Male Griffins, Winged Lions and Panthers, each with three. There are two arms with Martlets and two with Pelicans, and single showings of a Bagwyn, a Wyvern, a Salamander, a Winged Heraldic Antelope, a Pegasus, a Sea-Lion, an Enfield, a Winged Talbot, a Sea-Unicorn, a Marine Goat or Capricorn and the latest hybrid monster, the Draconursus or Dragon-Winged Bear of Peter Giles, another dracologist (*below*).



Also worth showing are Richard Goddard's Pelican crest (*right*) and Stephen Friar's Male Griffin as seen in this bookplate drawn by Andrew Jameson (*over page*). This completes the set of fabulous beasts displayed in this Armorial of our own members' arms, but others from it may well be shown in later issues.

The White Lion Society's Secretary may be reached at 5 Weatherly Avenue, Bath BA2 2PF.





Stephen Friar's bookplate drawn by Andrew Jameson

Another Somerset Dragon

We know from Brian Wright that Somerset is full of Dragons, but here is one he seems to have missed, caught in the pages of the *Journal of the Somerset Heraldry Society* (Christmas 2004). This bookplate, showing the arms of Gerard Leighton of Hassage Manor, has a most distinctive Wyvern as a crest, and was taken from a drawing by Mrs Drummond-Murray of Mastrick, the mother of Peter, Slains Pursuivant and noted heraldist, and also the Editor of *The Double Tressure*.



A New Look at Saint George

For over 180 years, the British Gold Sovereign coin has carried the image of Saint George and the Dragon sculpted by Benedetto Pistrucchi (*see No 22*), issued year by year. But for the year 2005, the Royal Mint has commissioned a new design, by Timothy Noad (*see also No 54*), done in his vigorous modern style. It looks as if the Saint has dismounted from his horse, which is rearing up in the background, and is preparing to take a mighty swipe at the dragon, apparently as yet uninjured, in what must be seen as a well-balanced design, worthy of replacing the old standard. It will be interesting to see whether the Mint will now keep this image going, or whether its new-found delight in creating changing patterns will lead to fresh designs every year, as seems to be happening with our regular pound coins. Perhaps the possibility of an imminent switch to Euro coins has spurred the Mint to produce as many new designs as they can manage while they still have the freedom to do so. For the time being, we welcome the latest dragon, and congratulate Tim Noad on his powerful interpretation of an ancient theme.

